Tsukiyo no Toratsugumi

by Kasai Sui

Chapter 6.2

The End
TheEndManga.wordpress.com

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LIES.
MY LIFE ENDED UP FULL OF THEM.
—UGLY.
SNIP

Story Teller Story

[story:02 NANCY]

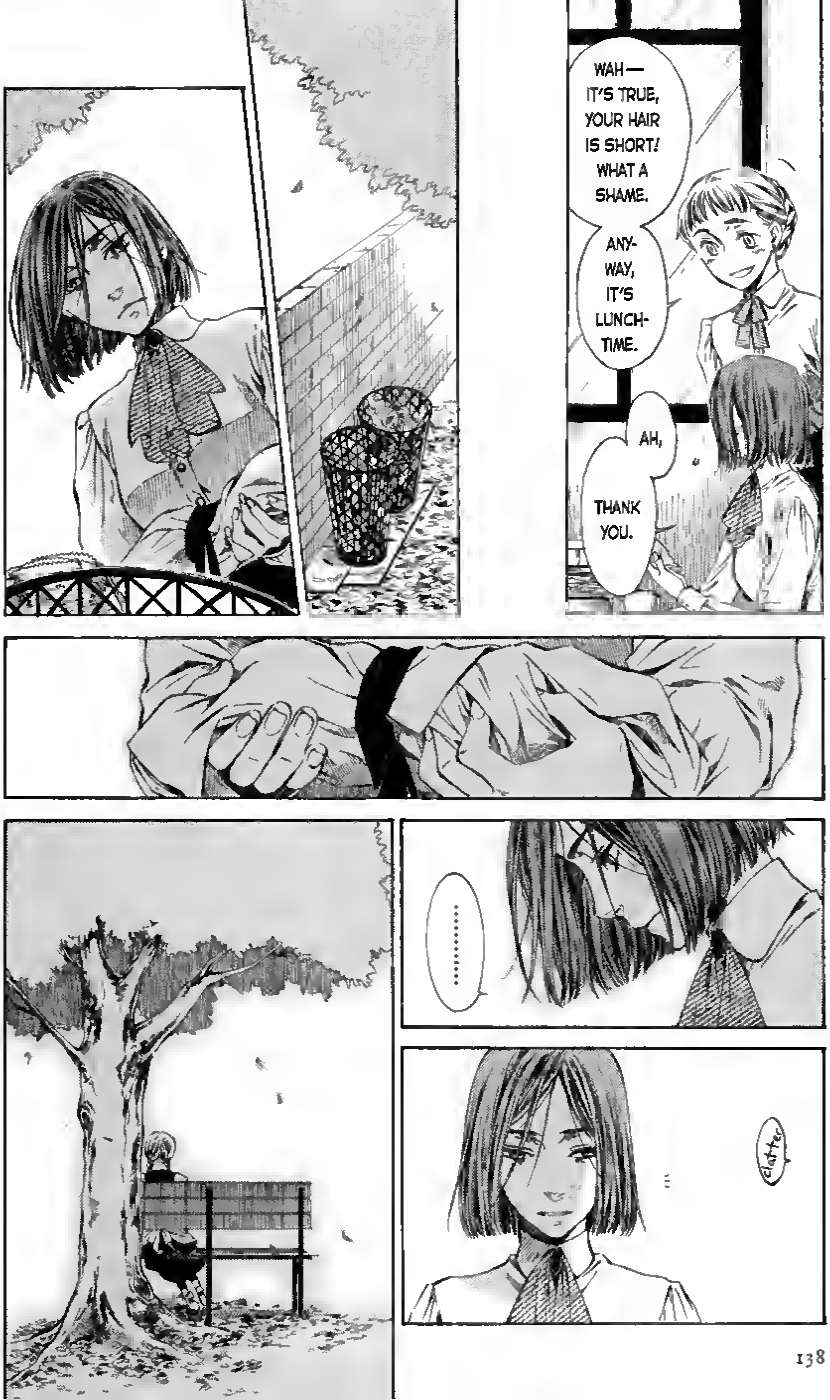
WHAT-...!
WHAT ON EARTH IS THIS!?
THINK OF HOW IT WOULD LOOK TO THE PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGE...
THINK OF THE RUMOURS—
...YES.
WHAT DID YOU DO TO YOUR HAIR, MISS REID!?
LAST NIGHT WHEN I WAS RETURNING HOME, I HELPED A DRUNKEN MAN WHO'D TRIPPED AND FALLEN INTO A DRAIN IN THE EEL DISTRICT.
WHEN HE CLUNG TO ME, I LOST MY BALANCE AND ENDED UP IN THE GUTTER MYSELF.
I WASHED MY HAIR, BUT I COULDN'T GET THE SMELL OUT NO MATTER WHAT, SO I DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE BEST TO CUT IT.

BUT YOU ACTED SPLENDIDLY MISS REID,
AND YOUR HAIR WILL GROW BACK.
THE EEL DISTRICT ISN'T A VERY PROPER PLACE, AFTER ALL.
I SEE.
SO THAT'S IT.
RIGHT ...
.....
YES.
...SHE'S SO EASY TO FOOL.
... GOOD MORNING, MISS REID.
NOW, NOW!
THE FIRST BELL IS RINGING!
clap clap
PLEASE HEAD BACK TO THE CLASS-ROOM!
=

GOOD MORNING NANCY.
YOU'RE ALWAYS THE ONLY ONE WHO GREETS ME FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.
Ha
YOU SURPRISED ME.
HEHE.
...SO? DOES IT SUIT ME?
YES.
SOMEHOW, IT IS VERY MUCH YOU.
THANK YOU.
NOW HURRY TO THE CLASSROOM.
OKAY.
I'M STARTING NOW, SO EVERYONE TAKE THEIR SEATS.
rustle
UWAH!
KYAH—
SHE REALLY CUT HER HAIR!
EH—
TURN TO PAGE 12.
WE'LL PICK UP FROM WHERE WE LEFT OFF.
hit
—"HONOUR THY FATHER AND MOTHER."

"THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY."
hit
Thou shalt not commit adultery.
whisper whisper
Honour thy father and mother.
hit
"THOU SHALT NOT KILL."
crumple
Thou shalt not kill.
OH?
ARE YOU GIRLS HAVING A FUN DISCUSSION?
OKAY, LET'S RESUME.
"THOU SHALT NOT STEAL."
"THOU..."
Thou shalt not steal.
KEEP THE GOSSIP FOR AFTER THE LESSON, DIANA.
AH...
I'LL TAKE THIS AWAY FOR NOW.

"...SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOUR."
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE I NEED IT, BUT...
MISS REID!
...STORY TELLER? WELL-MEANING ADVICE ON TELLING LIES... 33 EEL STREET, 4TH FLOOR OF THE BOOK STORE.
THAT GIRL MUST HAVE PICKED THIS UP FROM SOMEWHERE.
WAS THERE EVEN A BOOK STORE IN THAT TOWN?
...SOME PEOPLE START UP THE STRANGEST BUSINESSES.
.....


WAH— IT'S TRUE, YOUR HAIR IS SHORT! WHAT A SHAME.
ANY-WAY, IT'S LUNCH-TIME.
AH, THANK YOU.
.....
Elaine
:

MISS REID.
MAY I SIT HERE?
YES...
NANCY.
I WAS TOLD THAT MY SANDWICHES WILL GROW MOLD IF I LEAVE THEM IN THE CLASSROOM.
AH...
I'M STAYING HERE.
IT'S GOTTEN PRETTY COLD, SO WHY DON'T YOU EAT IN THE CLASSROOM?
...BUT,
YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT ME, MISS.
AREN'T YOU COLD MISS?
I QUITE LIKE IT?
BOTH OUTSIDE AND THE MOLD.

YOU'RE NOT DESPISED BY ANYONE.
YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS HASN'T TURNED WEIRD.
.....
TELLING HALF-TRUTHS, LOOKING DOWN ON OTHERS, SEEMINGLY SECURE BUT ALWAYS WORRYING
LIES AND BASELESS CHATTER, NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES REPEATED... ARE STILL JUST LIES.
PEOPLE WHO KNOW THE "TRUTH" ARE THE STRONGEST, THOUGH.
.....
THANK YOU, MISS.
I'M SORRY FOR USING SUCH MENIAL WORDS.

IT'S ALL RIGHT, BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE SAYING.
I'M NOT REALLY SUITED FOR COMMUNAL LIVING.
THOSE PEOPLE SIMPLY WANTED A SCAPEGOAT, THAT'S ALL.
BE-SIDES...
YOU STILL STAYED WITH ME.
rushie

BOOKS STORE
creak
—THERE REALLY IS ONE...

rustle
...ARE YOU LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?
.....
ARE YOU...
THE STORY TELLER?

YES,
I AM THE STORY TELLER.
IF YOU WANT SOME ADVICE, THEN I ASK THAT YOU FOLLOW ME UPSTAIRS.
THIS WAY, PLEASE.
CREAK

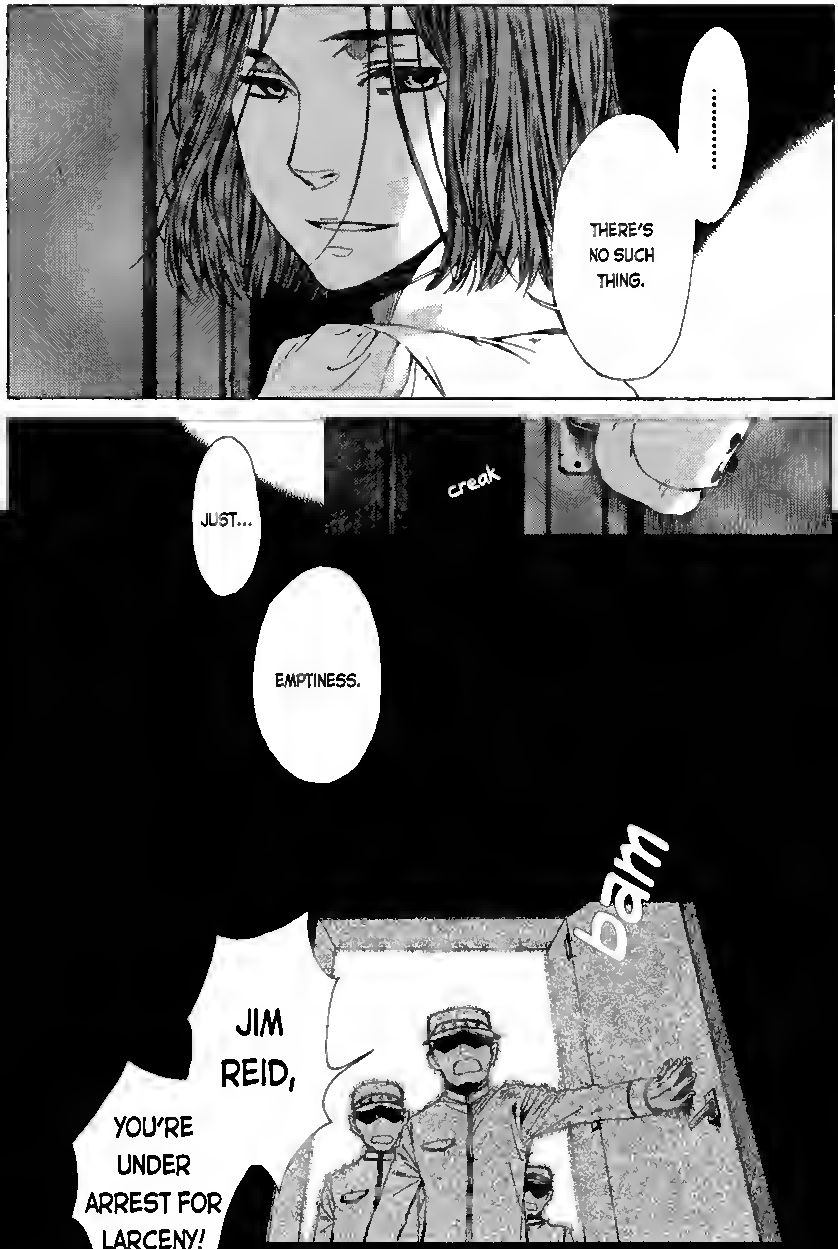
PLEASE TAKE A SEAT.
THE NIGHTS ARE GETTING COLDER, AREN'T THEY?
Hehe
UNFORTUN-ATELY, MY HOUSEKEEPER IS ABSENT RIGHT NOW.
I CAN ONLY DO ABOUT THIS MUCH.
I WASN'T EXACTLY PREPARED FOR COMPANY, BUT...
Clack
HERE YOU GO.

...I'M REID.
I CAME TO COMPLAIN.
I HEARD YOU WERE A STORY TELLER, BUT I GUESS YOU ARE ACTUALLY A MAGICIAN?
VERY ARTSY BUT TRIVIAL.
I'M JUST SOMEONE WHO TELLS STORIES.
—MY NAME IS ED HUGHES.
I APOLOGISE FOR THAT.
HOWEVER...
IT IS FUTILE WHEN THEY ACT OLDER THAN THEIR AGE, DON'T YOU AGREE?
A COM PLAINT?
ONE OF MY STUDENTS USED YOUR LEAFLET AS A MEANS OF HARASSMENT.
CAN I ASK YOU TO ONLY SCATTER SUCH UNUSUAL THINGS WHERE CHILDREN'S HANDS CAN'T REACH THEM?
...IT WOULD BE A LIE TO SAY IT WOULDN'T HAPPEN ANYMORE.
TELLING LIES IS FILTHY.

THEN,
HOW DO I KNOW WHETHER A LIE HAS BEEN TOLD AMONG THE THINGS THAT WERE SAID JUST NOW?
KNOWING LIES DOESN'T MEAN THAT ONE WILL BE TELLING LIES
...HMPH.
YOU'VE QUITE THE UNUSUAL BUSINESS HERE.
A TEACHER? IT'S A SPLENDID OCCUPATION.
...BUT, I'D SAY WE'RE QUITE SIMILAR.
PEOPLE DEPEND ON YOU... BUT MY DAILY LIFE IS RIFE WITH LIES

...RIGHT.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN WHAT YOU'RE SELING WOULD BE CLOSER TO THE TRUTH.
.....
...THAT'S RIGHT.
BUT WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT, I FEEL THAT IT IS NOT EXACTLY RIGHT.
?
BECAUSE I'M A PART-OWNER OF THE LIE.
—"SELL-ING".
OR IS IT RECEIVING?
YOU ARE FREE TO USE IT...
OR THROW IT AWAY. I DON'T CARE.
IS THIS YOUR HAIR?

.....
UNDER-STOOD.
I SHALL KEEP IT FOR YOU.
...WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WHEN A LIE HOLDS TRUE, IT DOESN'T HURT ANYONE.
—EXCEPT YOUR-SELF.
clack
I'VE KEPT YOU LONG ENOUGH.
I'M LEAVING.
TELL YOUR "TRUTH".
COME BY WHENEVER YOU NEED TO...
I'LL BE HERE.


THERE'S NO SUCH THING.
.....
creak
JUST...
EMPTINESS.
bam
JIM REID,
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR LARCENY!

A CHILD?
HIS DAUGHTER.
LEAVE HER.
HER FATHER IS A PETTY THIEF AND HER MOTHER IS A MISSING PROSTITUTE.
HEY.
WALK FASTER.
WELL, SHE'S DOOMED, NOTHING TO BE DONE ABOUT IT.
IT WAS A WINTER DAY OF MY 14TH YEAR WHEN MY FATHER WAS ARRESTED.
CLATTER
GO AWAY!
WE DON'T WANT THE LIKES OF YOU HERE!

I RAN AWAY FROM THE VILLAGE THAT I HAD LIVED IN...
AND WALKED FOR THREE HARD DAYS BEFORE I REACHED A LARGE TOWN,
WEARING ONLY THREADBARE CLOTHES, MISSING MY SHOES, AND HAVING LOST EVERYTHING.
I'M SORRY...
LEAVE THE TOWN!!
I DON'T HAVE FOOD TO FEED SOMEONE WHO LOOKS LIKE A CRIMINAL.
ERM, I'M SORRY, BUT WE HAVE ENOUGH HELPERS FOR NOW...
YOU'RE THE DAUGHTER OF THAT THIEF THEY CAUGHT LAST MONTH, AREN'T YOU...?
SORRY, BUT I CAN'T HIRE YOU.
YOU WANT TO WORK?

AT THIS RATE...
I'LL DIE...
GREEN GROCERY
ARGH, YOU THIEF!
AAH...
I'M THE SAME.

I'M THE SAME AS THEM...
I STEAL TO SURVIVE
I LIE TO SURVIVE—
...AHA.
I SELL MY BODY TO SURVIVE
I'M SO DIRTY. WHY...
WHY DO I WANT TO...
LIVE LIKE THIS...?

STOP...
ALREADY...
WANTING TO BE HAPPY,
BUT UNABLE TO BE HAPPY.
...I'M
TIRED OF IT...
HOW-EVER,
A MIRACLE HAPPENED.
...YOU-
WHAT HAPPENED!?

YOU FINALLY OPENED YOUR EYES. I'M SO HAPPY!
HOW DO YOU FEEL?
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
MY NAME IS SASHA BROWN.
NANCY.
NANCY REID.
NANCY IS IT?
WHEN YOU CAN GET UP YOU'RE FREE TO COME SIT WITH ME.
ARE YOU HUNGRY?
WE CAN TALK WHILE YOU EAT, NANCY.
YOU SEE, I'M OPENING A SCHOOL.
THERE'LL BE MANY CHILDREN LIKE YOU THERE.

I JUST CAN'T STAND BY WHILE CHILDREN ARE SUFFERING...
BUT DON'T HESITATE TO ASK FOR THINGS YOU NEED THAT I CAN HELP YOU WITH.
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT THOSE INJURIES OR HOW YOU ENDED UP SO ILL.
SHE'S DIFFERENT FROM ME.
—AAH...
A GOOD UPBRINGING.
SHE DOESN'T KNOW FILTH,
OF HOW UGLY PEOPLE CAN BE.
THIS PERSON IS SO KIND.
SHE..
DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING.
...MISS BROWN.

CAN I TELL YOU MY STORY?
OF COURSE.
I LOST MY PARENTS IN AN ACCIDENT AROUND HERE.
OH...
MY PARENTS WERE FARMERS FROM A SMALL VILLAGE UP NORTH, BUT... THE CARRIAGE THEY WERE IN FELL OFF A CLIFF.
I WASN'T ABLE TO FIND THEM... OR BURY THEM.
AFTER THAT,
MY UNCLE SLASHED MY WRISTS AND LEFT ME FOR DEAD.
IT MUST BE BECAUSE HE WANTED THE FARM.
I SOMEHOW RECOVERED ...
IF I AM TO BE CHARGED OF A CRIME, LET IT BE FOR THE CRIME OF GRASPING THIS GOD-GIVEN OPPORTUNITY.
...PLEASE MISS BROWN.
LET ME WORK AT YOUR SCHOOL.
I'LL CLEAN I'LL DO ANYTHING.
PLEASE.
JUST LIKE THAT, GOD ALLOWED ME TO LIVE.

...IT MUST HAVE BEEN HARD.
POOR DEAR...
IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW
YOU'RE A GOOD GIRL
A GOOD GIRL...
—AAH...
THOSE WORDS
THE FIRST TIME...
SINCE I WAS BORN...
—MAYBE...

IF THERE EXISTED PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD...

WHO WERE RIGHTEOUS AND LIVED ONLY FOR THE TRUTH,

THEY'D IMMEDI-ATELY COME HERE,

—WANTING TO KILL ME.

clatter
...
SOME
...
SOME-
ONE
...
click
—WAIT
A BIT,
I'LL OPEN
THE LOCK.
MISS...
REID...
...

NANCY?
TAKE MY HAND.
.....
CAN YOU STAND?
ARE YOU HURT?
OR NOT?
CRASH!
...AH...
DON'T ...
NO... MORE...
BE-CAUSE ...
...MI...
MISS... REID...
IS SO NICE.

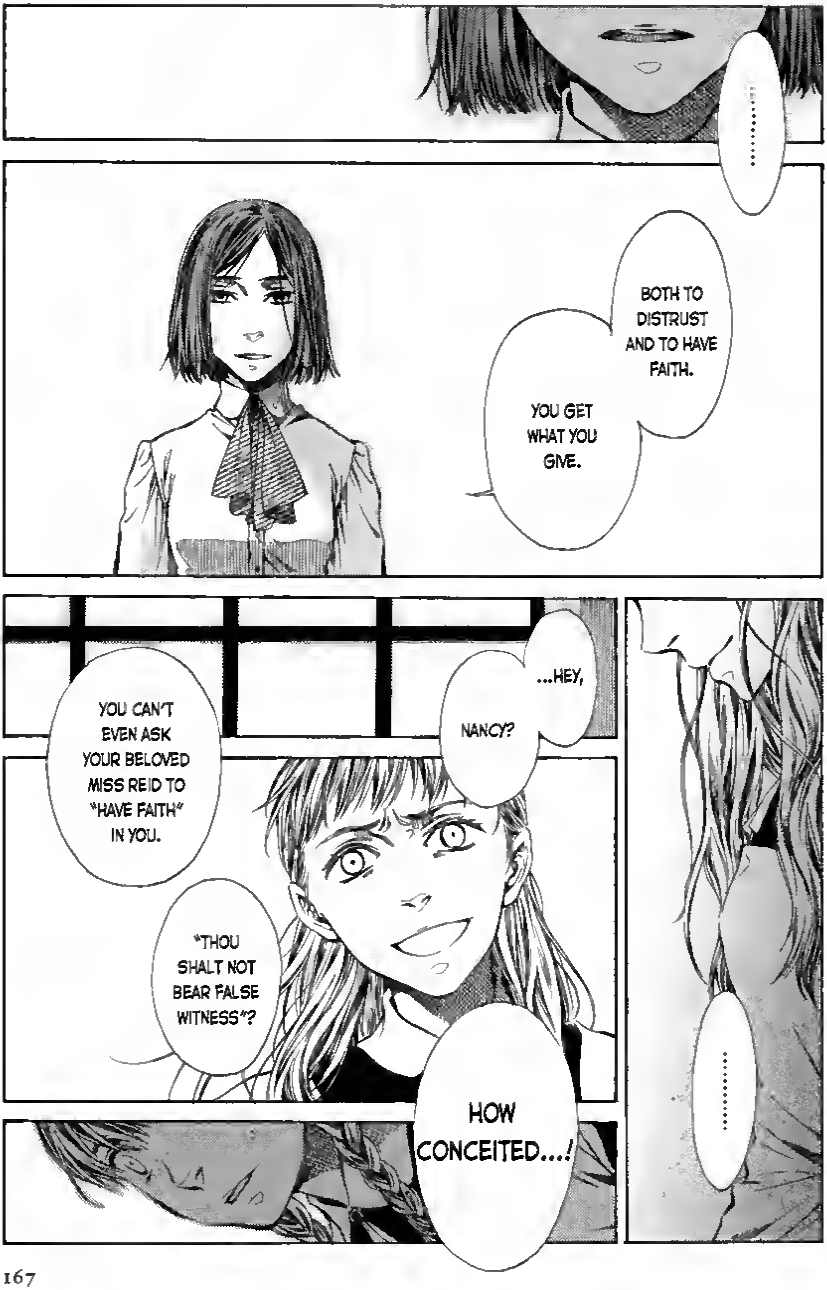
NANCY.
I... MUST HAVE DONE SOME BAD THINGS...
TO BE HATED BY SO MANY PEOPLE, RIGHT...?
ALWAYS LIKE THIS...
SOME-HOW...
HEHE.
MISS...

I'M FINE!
BECAUSE I KNOW THE "TRUTH".
AFTER ALL, I WAS TOLD THAT PEOPLE WHO OWN THE "TRUTH" ARE THE STRONGEST.
...MISS?

WELL, LOOKS LIKE YOU TWO...
ARE GETTING AWFULLY CLOSE.
UM, IT'S NOTHING.
...THAT'S RIGHT.
THAT IS QUITE A TOUGH QUESTION, DIANA.
OO YOU WANT THE PHILOSOPHY, OR WOULD YOU PREFER THE MATHEMATICS?
WHAT IS THE "TRUTH"? MISS,
I'D LOVE TO HEAR IT FROM YOU TOO.

BUT ALMOST ALL THE STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL...
THINK THAT NANCY IS A LIAR.
BECAUSE...
MISS, IN TRUTH, NANCY IS A REALLY BIG LIAR.
.....
!
WHEN DID I LIE...?
WITHOUT A CONCRETE EXAMPLE, IT'S JUST AN ABSTRACT ACCUSATION, SO I CAN'T SAY THAT IT'S SUFFICIENT ON ITS OWN.
SHE IS CLOSE TO YOU, MISS REID. THEREFORE, THEY CAN ONLY CONCLUDE THAT SHE IS THE SAME AS YOU.

WHAT NONSENSE ARE YOU IMPLY-ING...!?
BUT I SAW THEM.
THE SCARS FROM THE CUTS ON MISS REID'S WRISTS.
IT'S A CAPITAL SIN TO COMMIT SUICIDE, ISN'T IT?
...HUH?
THOSE SCARS WERE FROM AN ACCIDENT A LONG TIME AGO.
ACCIDENT?
THAT HAIRDO WAS ALSO AN ACCIDENT, RIGHT? THAT'S QUITE A LOT OF MISFORTUNE TO HAVE, MISS.
SAY, MISS.
ARE YOU REALLY TELLING THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH? WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF WE FOUND OUT THE TRUTH?
WHICH IS RIGHT: TO BE DECEIVED BECAUSE YOU HAVE FAITH, OR TO NOT BE DECEIVED BECAUSE YOU DISTRUST? WHICH IS THE "TRUTH"?
IS DISTRUST REALLY SUCH A BAD THING?
SAY, MISS, JUST WHAT IS THE "TRUTH"?


.....
BOTH TO DISTRUST AND TO HAVE FAITH.
YOU GET WHAT YOU GIVE.
...HEY, NANCY?
YOU CAN'T EVEN ASK YOUR BELOVED MISS REID TO "HAVE FAITH" IN YOU.
"THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS"?
HOW CONCEITED...!
.....

ADULTS ARE ALL HUGE LIARS.
THE NEXT DAY AS WELL,
AND THE NEXT DAY AFTER THAT, THE SNOW KEPT FALLING.
THE NEXT DAY, WE SAW THAT WINTER'S FIRST SNOW.
NANCY DIDN'T COME TO SCHOOL.
AH...
...said
... seems ...it
... well... Miss Reid... long...
... but ...

AT THAT TIME, I LEARNED THE FLEETING NATURE OF DECEPTION AND THE EASE OF LYING.

AT THAT TIME, I BELIEVED ONLY IN MYSELF AND STOPPED BELIEVING IN OTHERS.

AGAIN, THE ISOLATION.

AGAIN, THE GOSSIP.

WHEN IT MAKES ME SO MISERABLE

TO BECOME COVERED IN CRIMES AND LIES?

CREAK
—WELCOME MISS REID.
IT'S COLD OUT...
I'LL BRING YOU SOME-THING WARM.
I DON'T NEED IT.
.....
THEN HOW ABOUT WE SKIP STRAIGHT TO BUSINESS?
HAND ME A REQUIEM,
STORY TELLER.

I AM THE DAUGHTER OF A THIEF...
AND A PROSTITUTE.
I'M SO TIRED...
I WANT IT TO STOP.
IF IT WAS TO SAVE MYSELF, I DIDN'T MIND STEALING OR LYING.
I DECEIVED AND TOOK ADVANTAGE OF VIRTUOUS PEOPLE WITH A SMILE ON MY FACE.
I AM A LIAR OF THE WORST KIND.
PLEASE MAKE IT STOP.
...ARE YOU...
AFRAID OF DYING, MISS REID?

...ONCE A LIE HAS BEEN TOLD, ONE CANNOT TAKE IT BACK.
open
THERE IS NO CLOSURE UNLESS ONE REDEEMS THEIR SINS.
rustle
DON'T YOU...
HAVE SOMEONE YOU WANT TO HOLD HEAR, MISS REID?
...WHY?

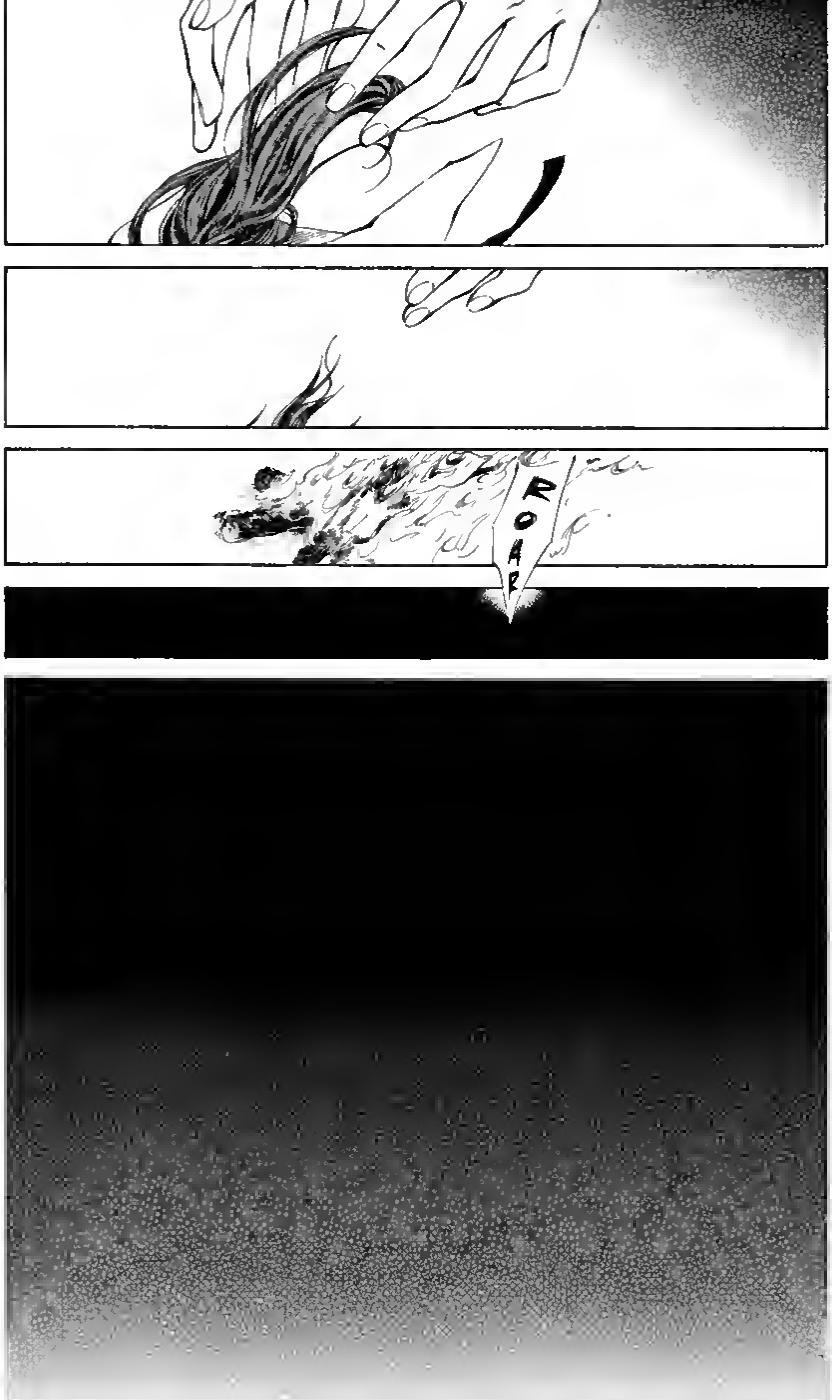
BECAUSE THE MOST PAINFUL LIE IN THIS WORLD IS THE LIE YOU TELL A LOVED ONE.

caress

NO MATTER WHICH ONE YOU CHOOSE, YOU WILL LOSE SOMETHING.
IT HURTS TO LIVE A LIFE BASED ON A LIE,
BUT LIVING A LIFE WITHOUT LIES IS ALSO HARD.
BUT YOU MUST CHOOSE NONETHELESS...
FOR THE SAKE OF LIVING.

EVEN IF LIVING FREELY IS HARD,
YOU'RE STILL FREE TO CHOOSE YOUR IMPAIRMENT, AREN'T YOU?
YOU ARE STILL ALIVE.

PLEASE CHOOSE, MISS REID.
AND WHEN YOU'VE MADE YOUR CHOICE, THAT WILL BE YOUR TRUTH.


ROAR

MOTHER,
WHAT IS IT?
THE SCHOOL TEACHER ASKED FOR YOU TO COME BY AGAIN.
OKAY... I'LL HEAD BACK.
HOWEVER, IT ISN'T THE ONE WITH THE GLASSES, BUT THE OTHER ONE?
SOMEHOW, SHE LOOKS VERY DIFFERENT WITH THAT SHORT RED HAIR...
HEY,
NANCY!

THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD
bam
...MISS.
W-
WHY?
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NOT...
WANT TO MEET ME.
I...
RAN AWAY...
I...
...BUT, THAT...
NOT WANT TO?

I'M SORRY. I...
I GOT SCARED.
YOUR EYES...
SEEMED TO LOOK RIGHT THROUGH ME, EXPOSING ME.
YOU SEE, I...
I REALLY AM A LIAR...
I KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO LOOK LIKE A GOOD GIRL, BUT,
THE TRUTH IS, THERE IS A LOT OF HATRED, SELF-PITY, AND GREED INSIDE MY HEART...!
BUT IF I LOOKED LIKE A GOOD GIRL, I THOUGHT THAT, AT LEAST MISS REID WOULD PRAISE ME.
HOPING,
LYING...
SINCE THE REAL ME WAS IGNORED BY EVERYONE,
I THOUGHT THAT YOU'D PROBABLY SCORN ME TOO...!

HEY NANCY,
YOU SAID THAT THIS HAIRDO SUITED ME.
WAS IT A LIE OR YOUR TRUE FEELINGS?
...IT DOES.
IT SUITS YOU.
THAT'S THE TRUTH.
...YEAH.

...I LIKE YOU,
NANCY.